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Busam

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(45) **Date of Patent: Oct. 4, 2016**

(54) **EXPANDABLE CAPACITY POCKET DEVICE**

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(73) Assignee: **ACCO BRANDS CORPORATION**, Lake Zurich, IL (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 18 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **14/150,969**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 9, 2014**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/750,563, filed on Jan. 9, 2013.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

B65D 27/00	(2006.01)
B42F 7/02	(2006.01)
B42D 1/00	(2006.01)
B42D 1/06	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***B42F 7/02*** (2013.01); ***B42D 1/007*** (2013.01); ***B42D 1/06*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC B42F 7/06; B42F 7/02; B42F 11/00; B42F 13/00; B65D 27/08

USPC 229/67.3, 67.1

See application file for complete search history.

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Assistant Examiner — Derek Battisti
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A pocket device including a major panel and a pocket panel coupled to the major panel and defining a pocket with the major panel. The pocket panel has a lateral dimension greater than a lateral dimension of the major panel at at least one position to thereby define a laterally-extending gap therebetween, which enables expansion of the pocket.

9 Claims, 19 Drawing Sheets

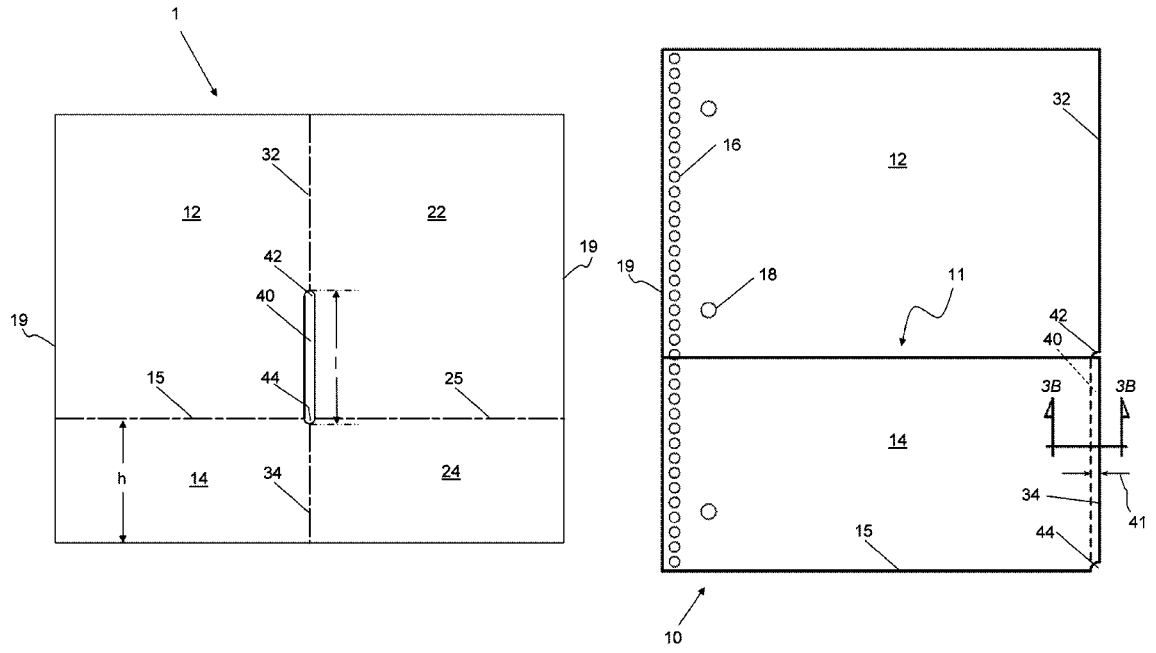


FIG. 1

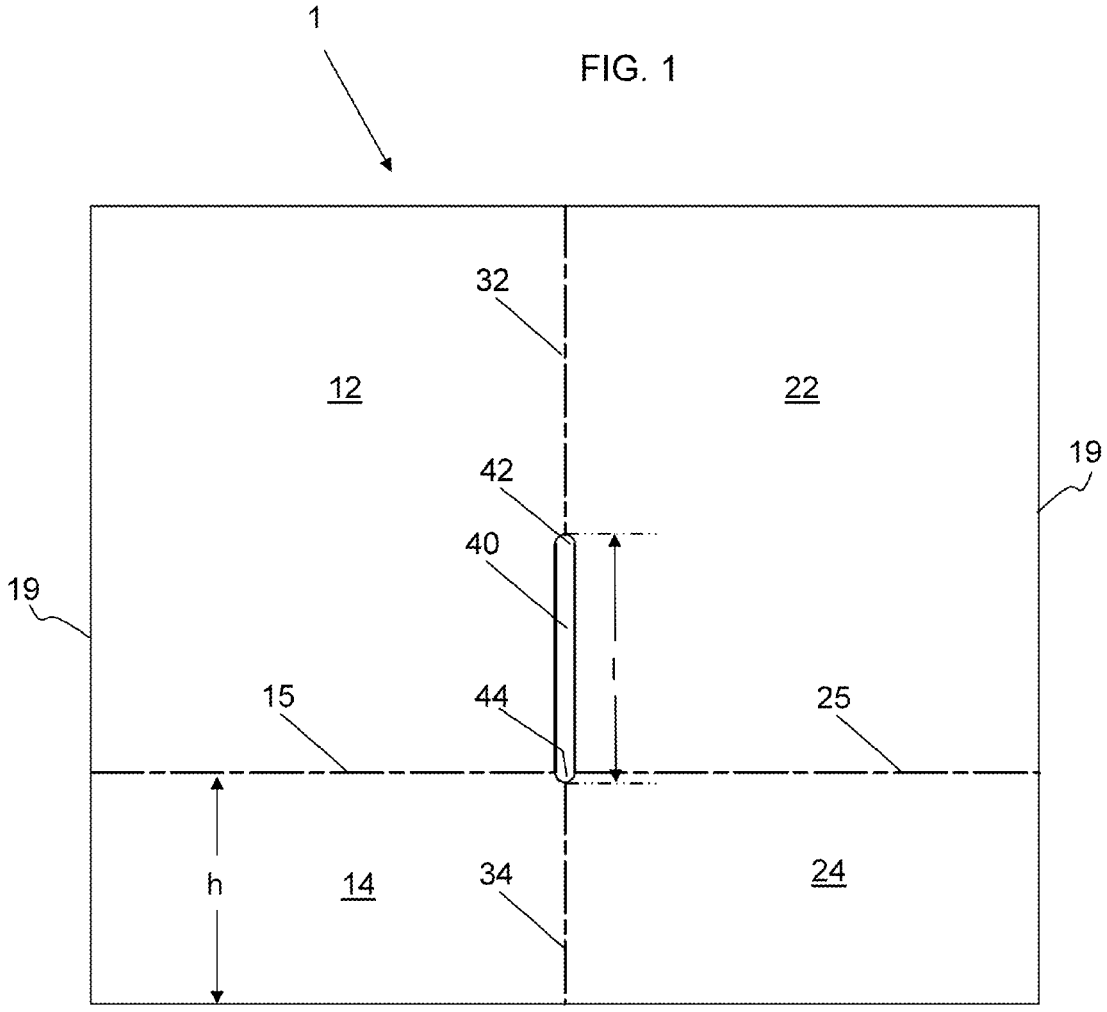
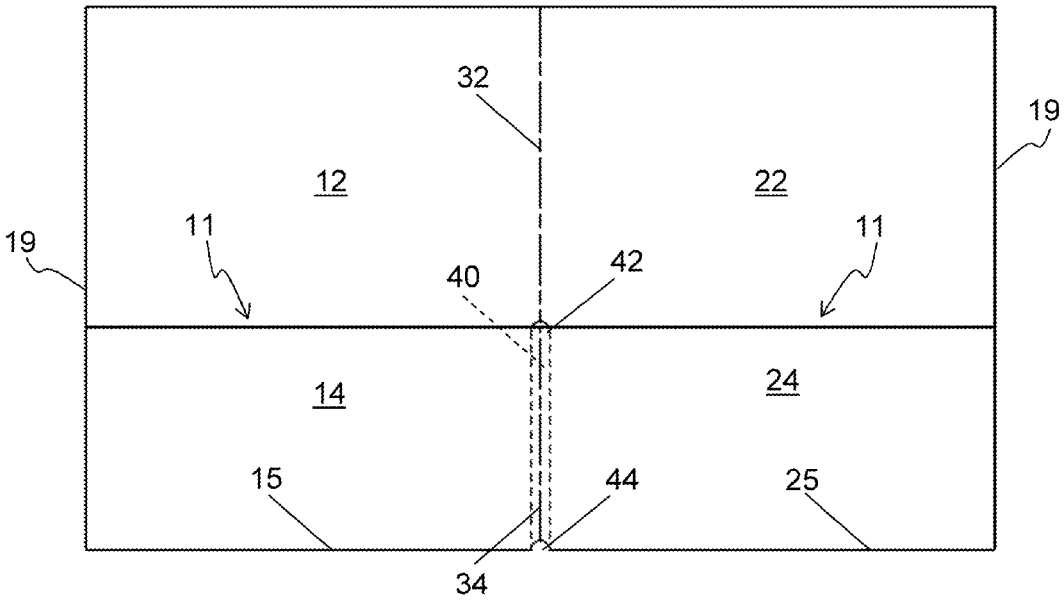


FIG. 2



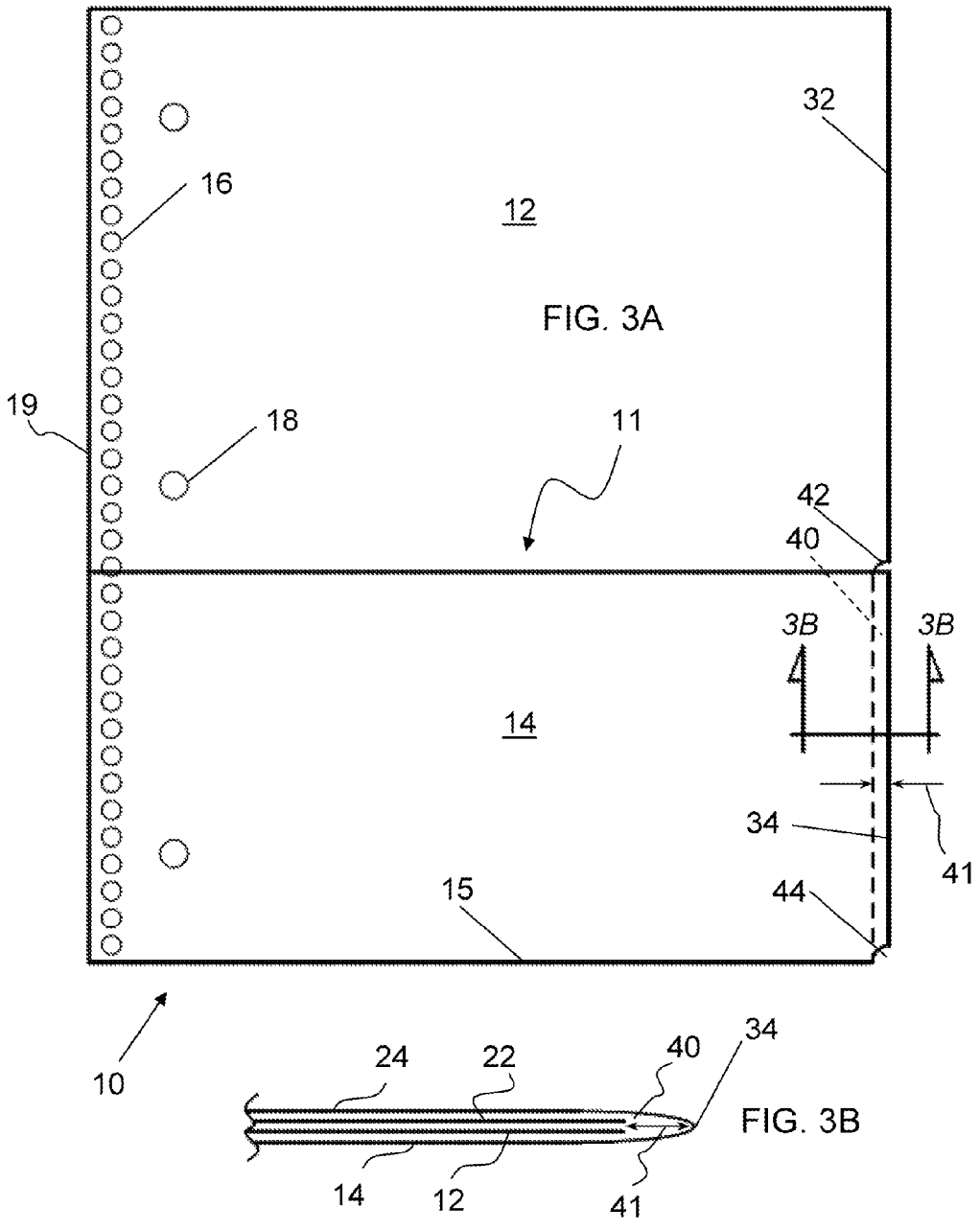
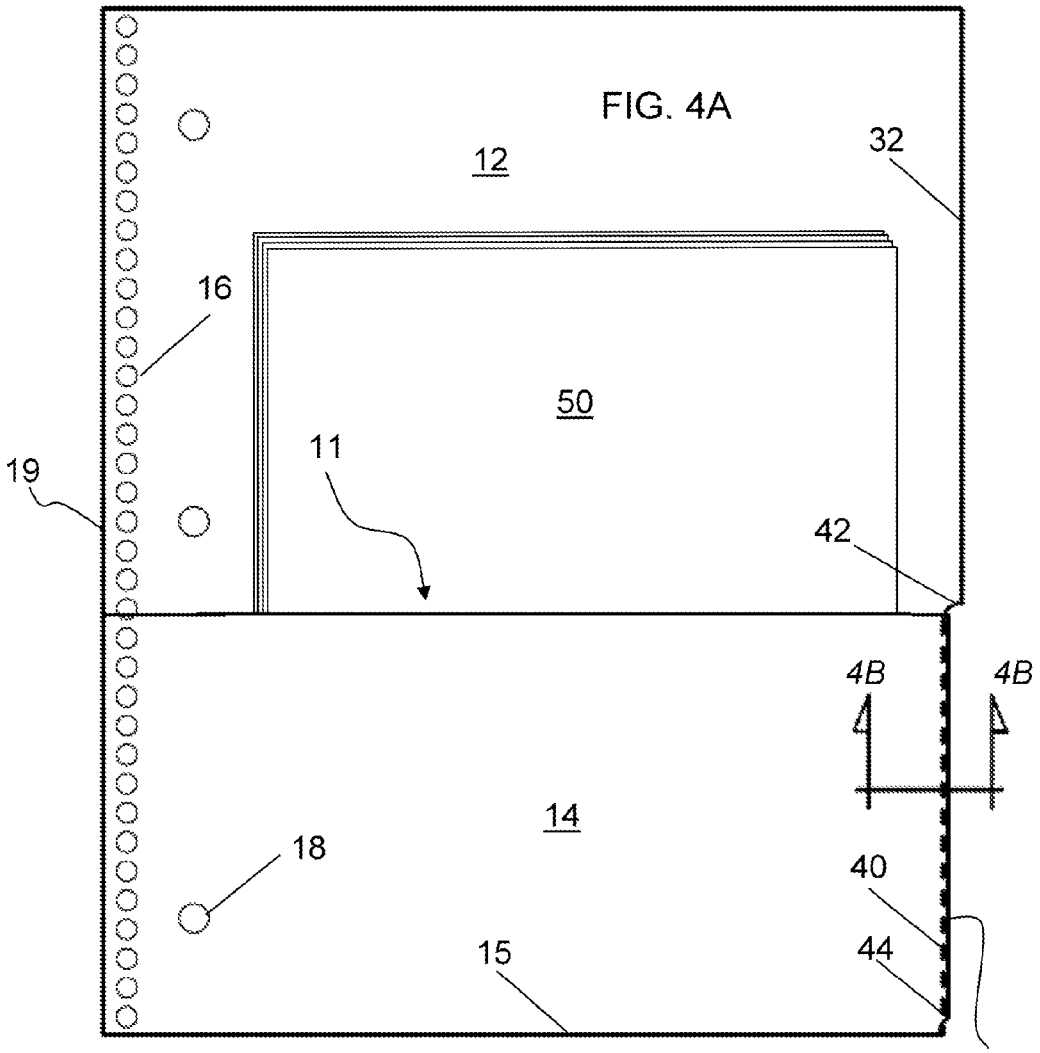


FIG. 3A

FIG. 3B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4B
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FIG. 4A

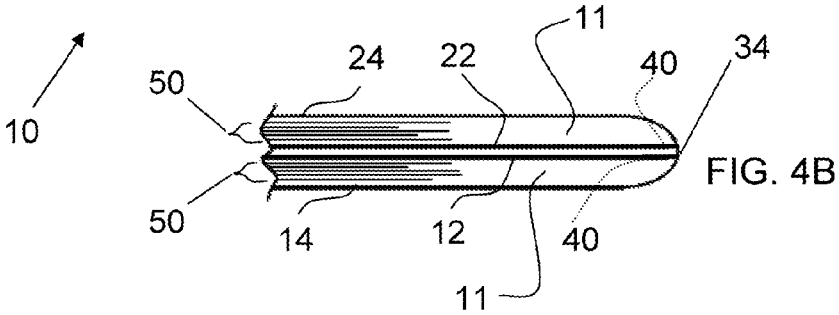
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FIG. 4B

FIG. 5

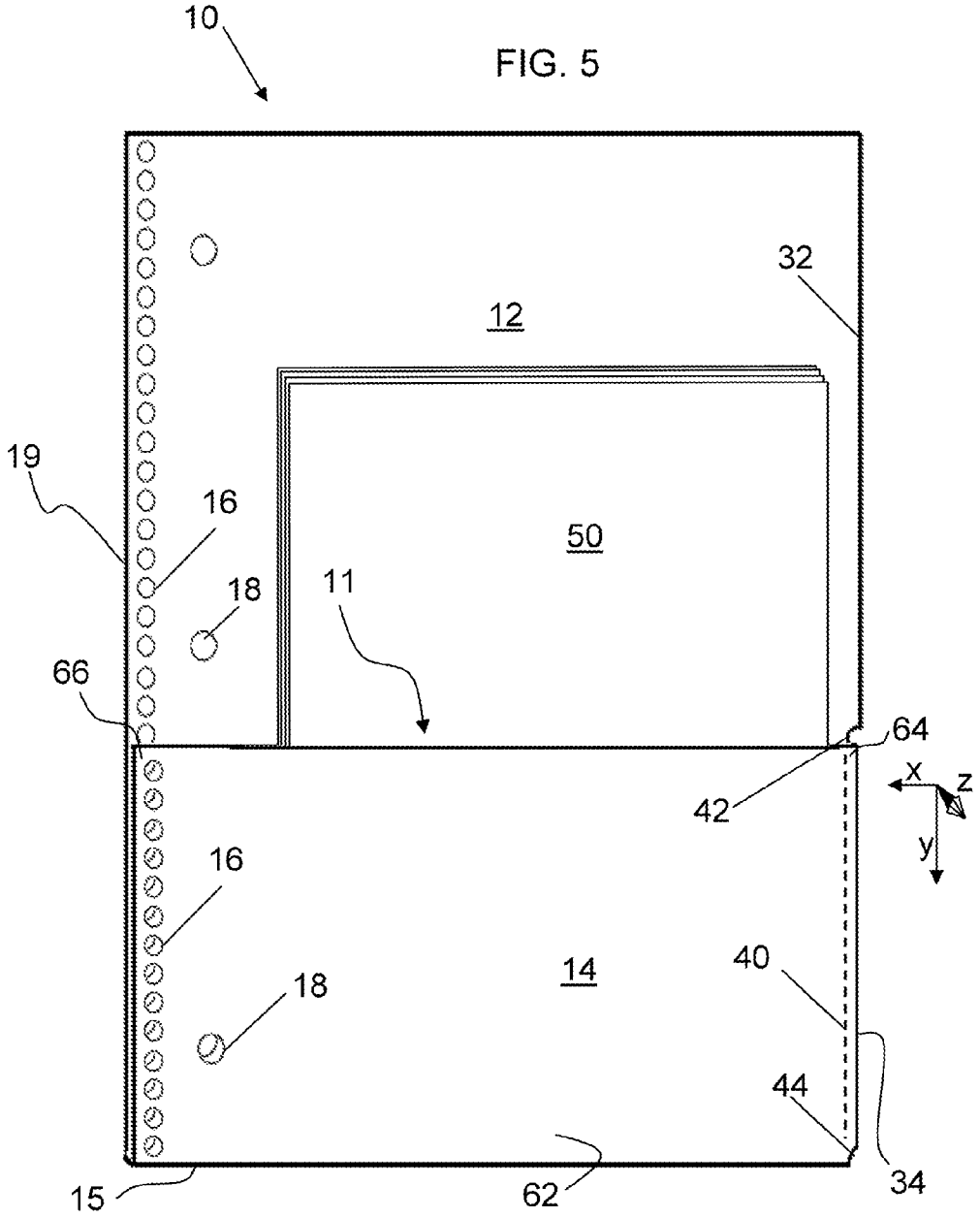
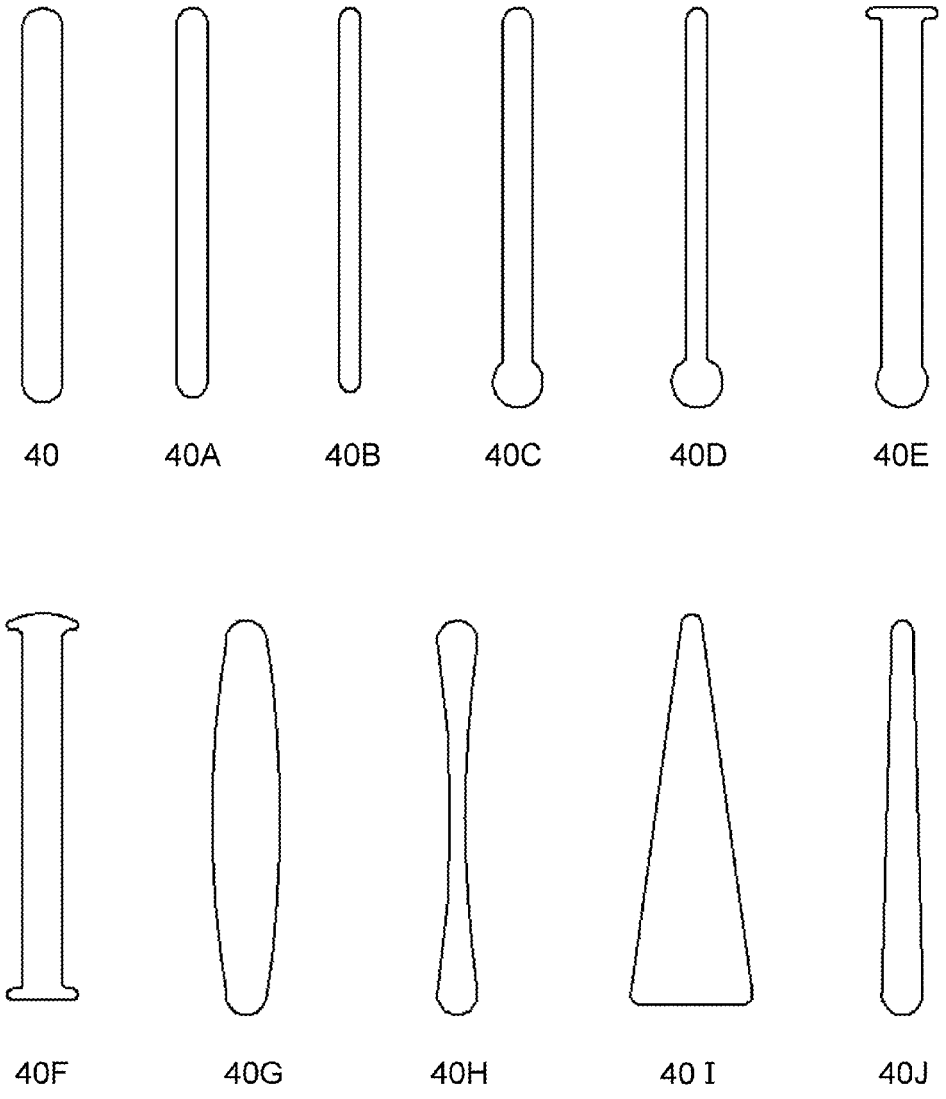


FIG. 6



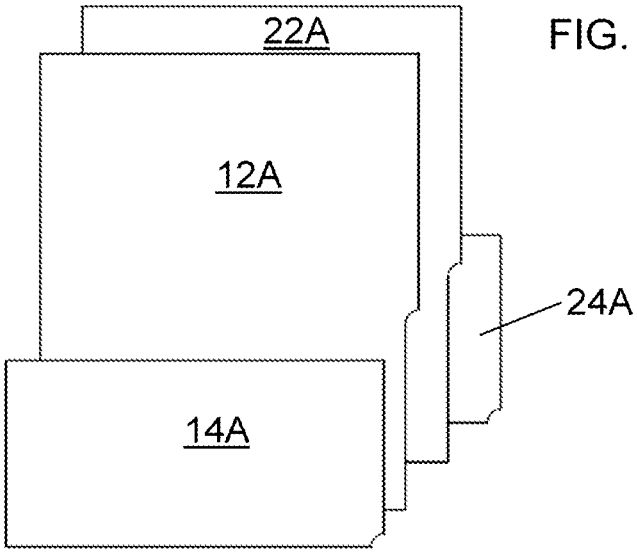


FIG. 7A

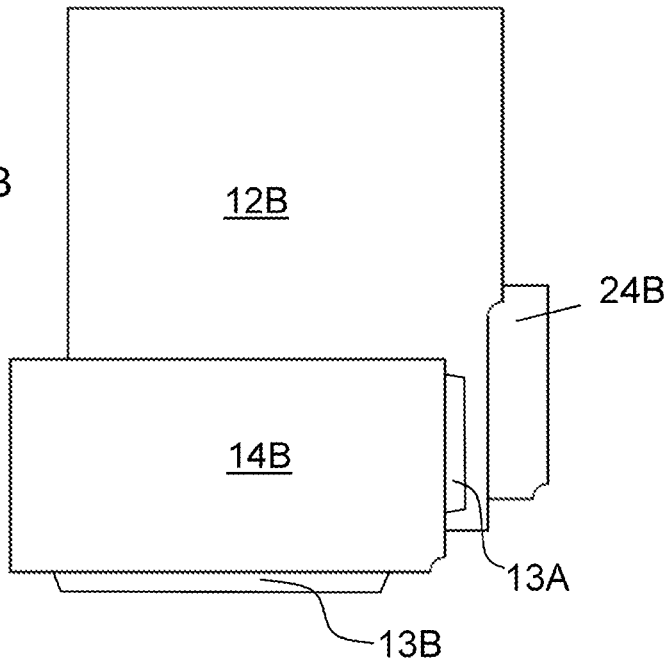


FIG. 7B

FIG. 8A

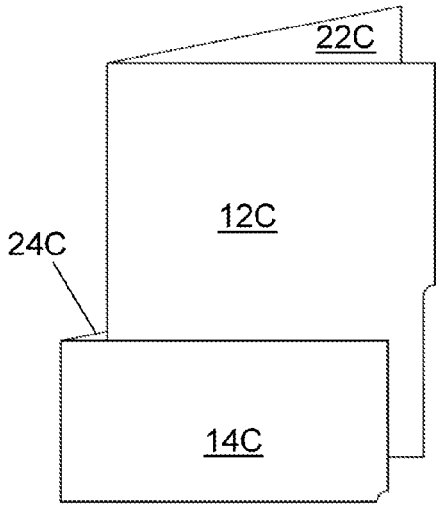


FIG. 8B

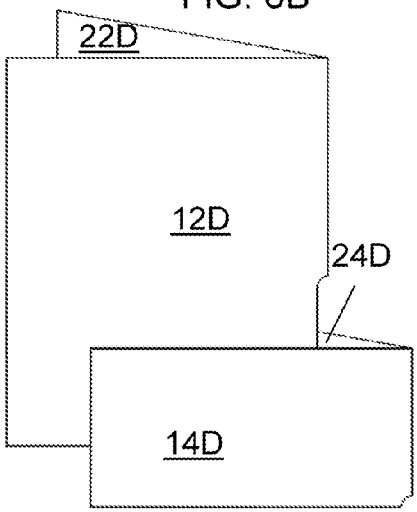


FIG. 8C

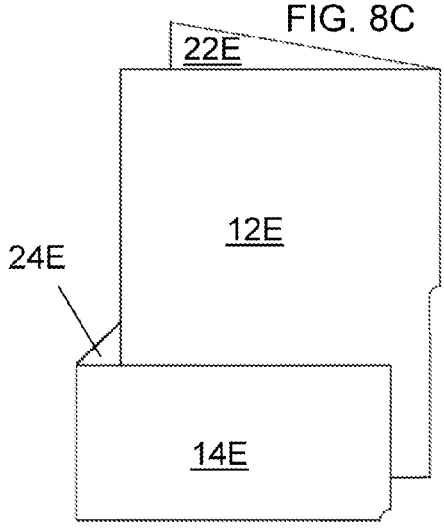


FIG. 8D

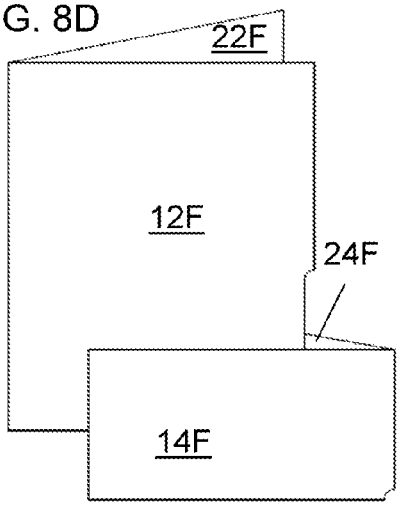


FIG. 9A

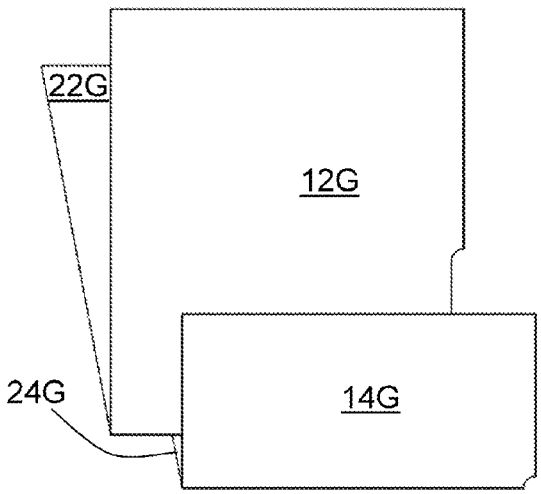


FIG. 9B

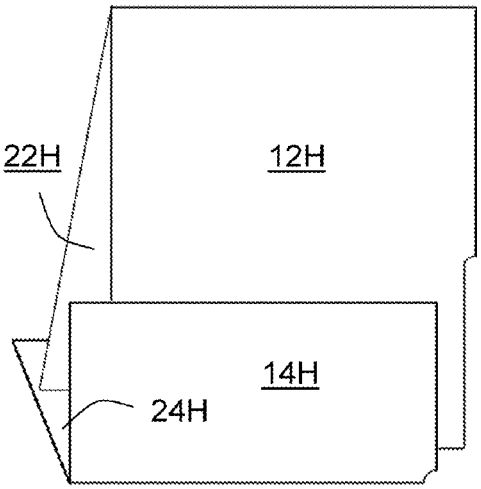


FIG. 9C

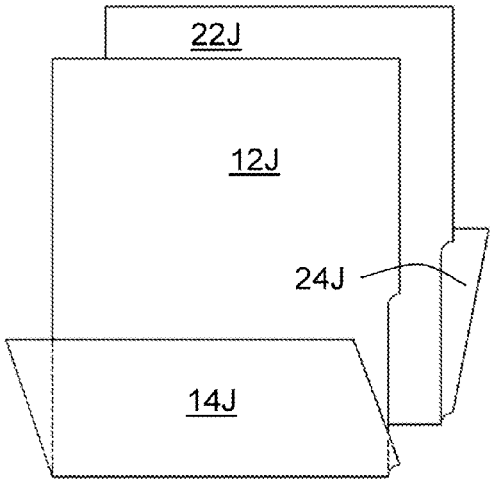
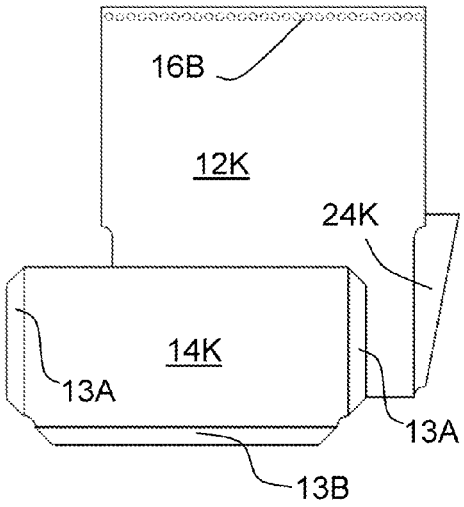


FIG. 9D



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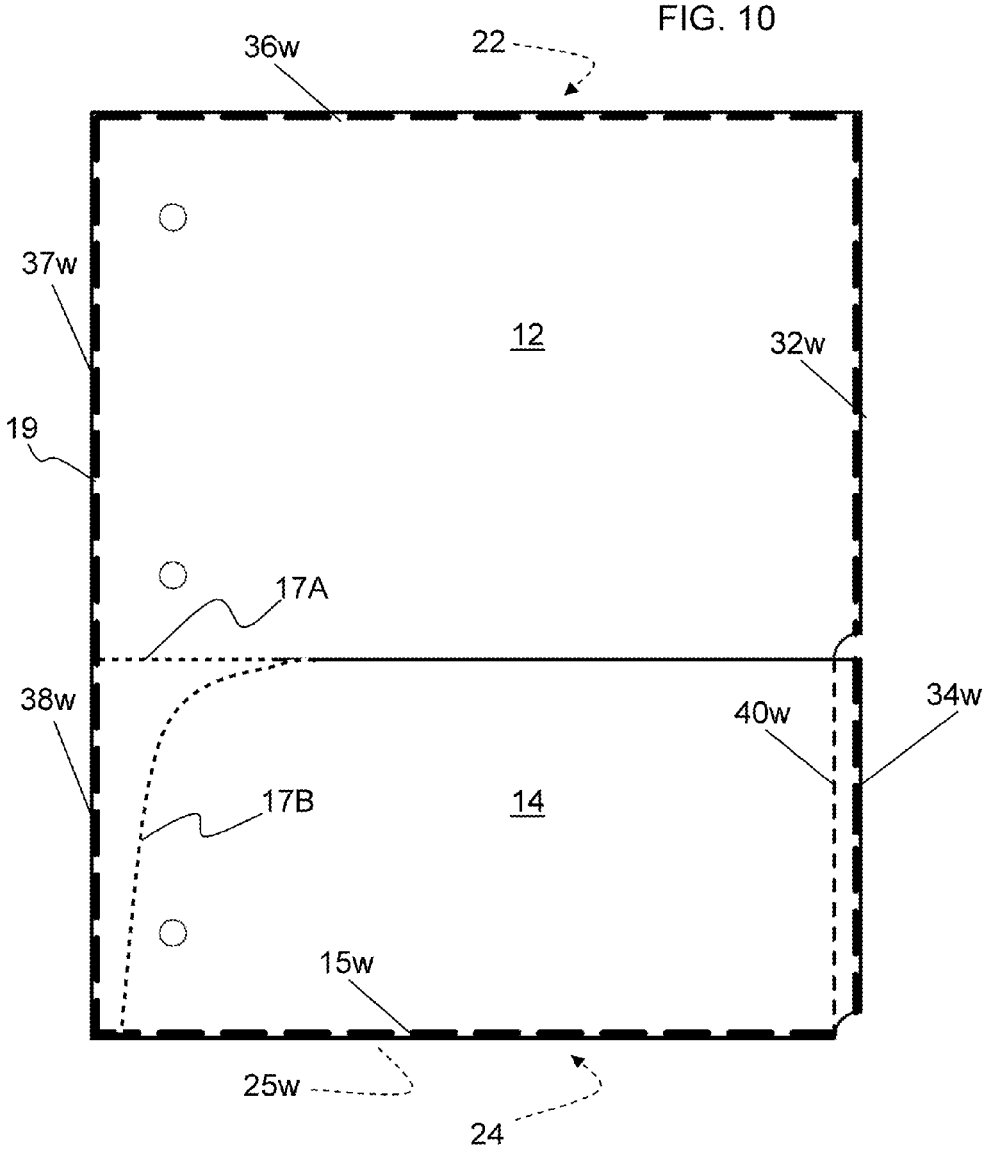


FIG. 11A

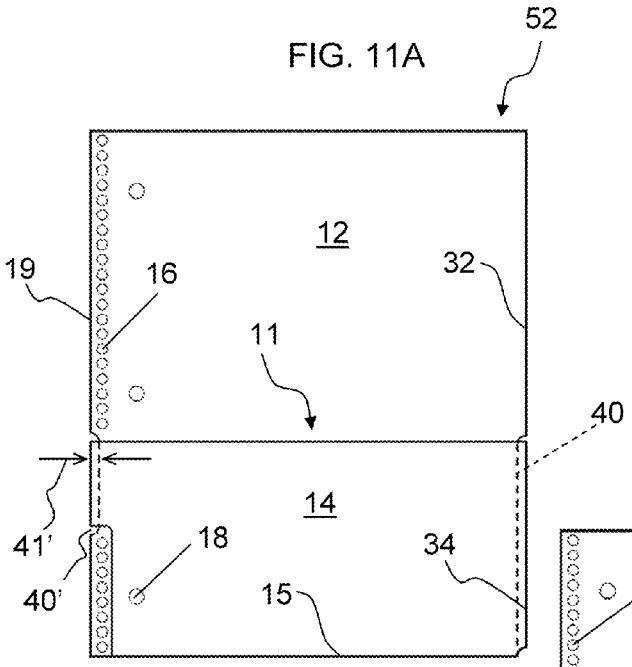


FIG. 11B

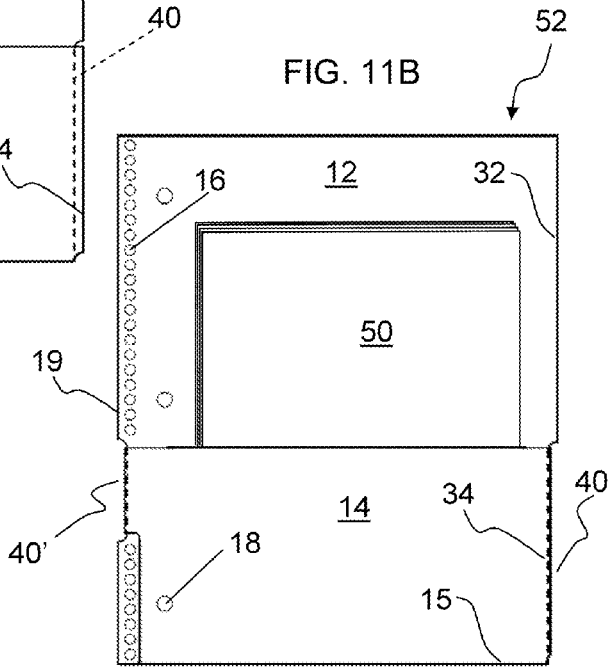


FIG. 12A

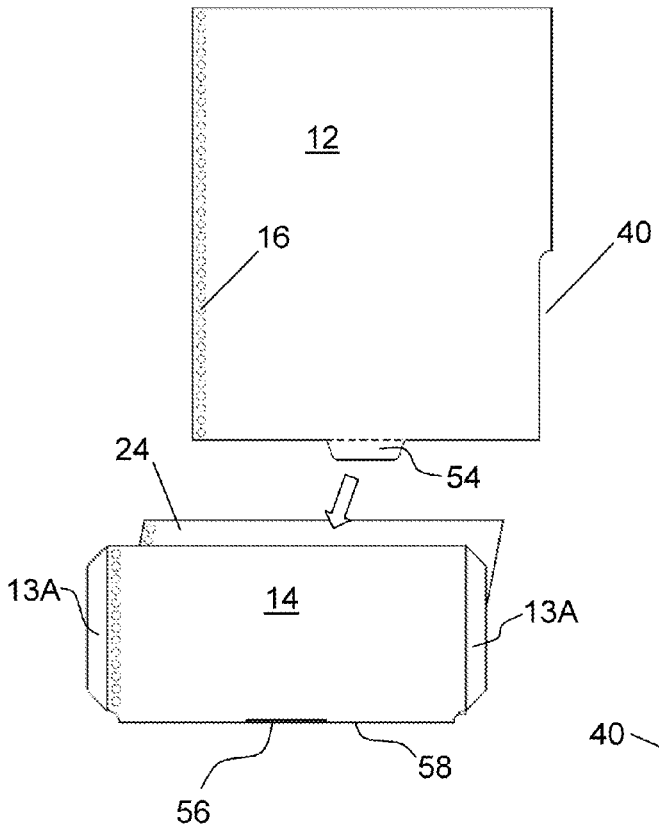


FIG. 12B

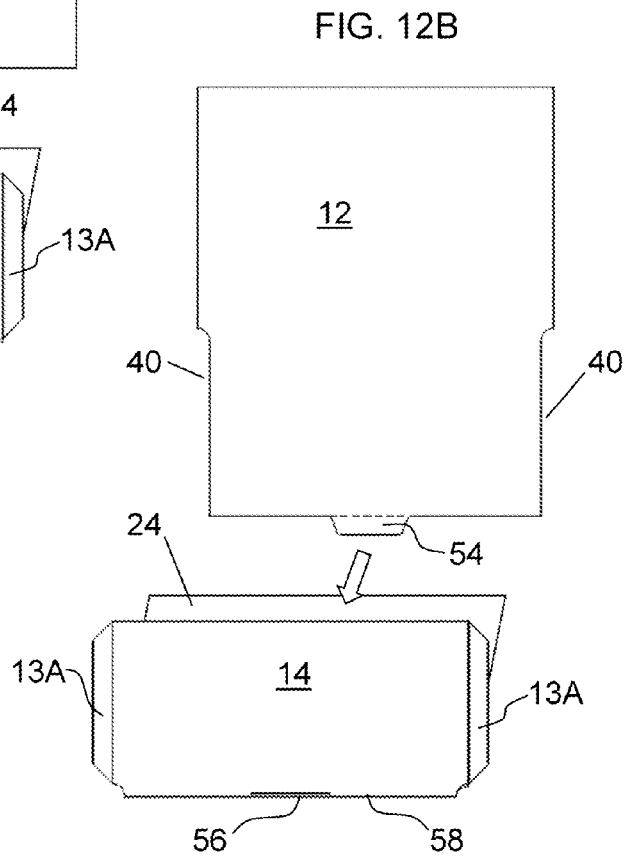


FIG. 13

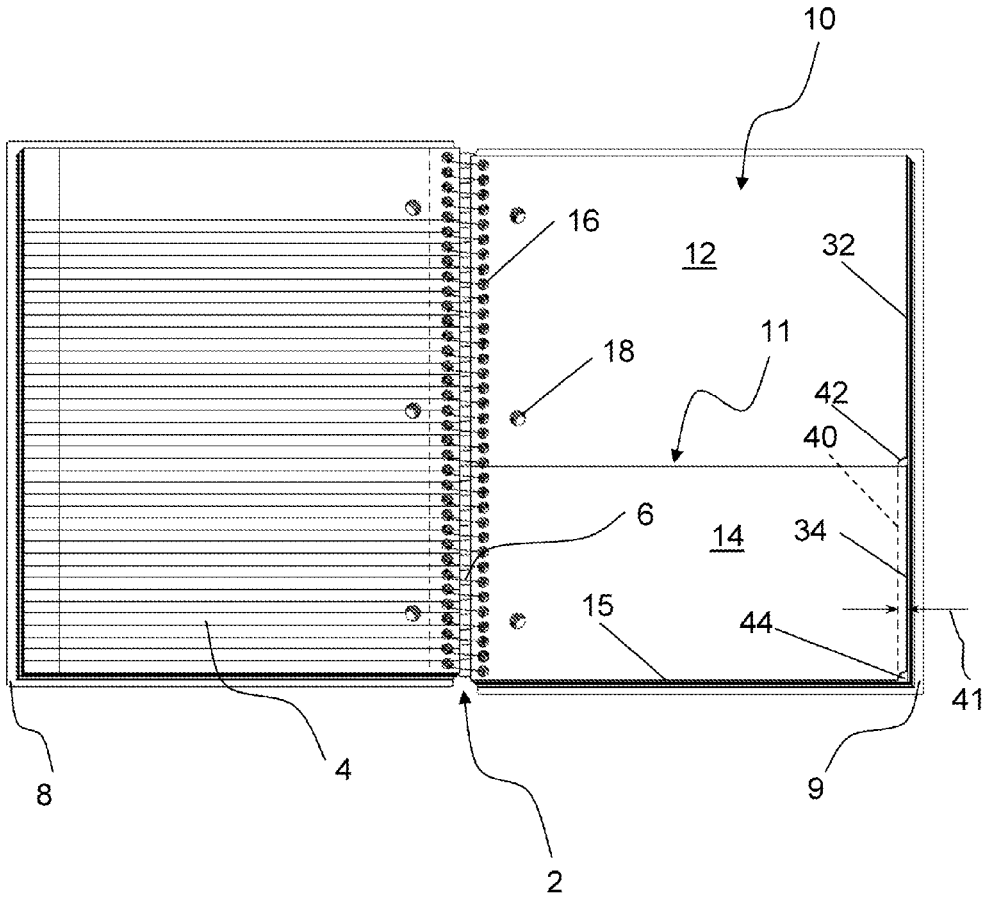


FIG. 14A

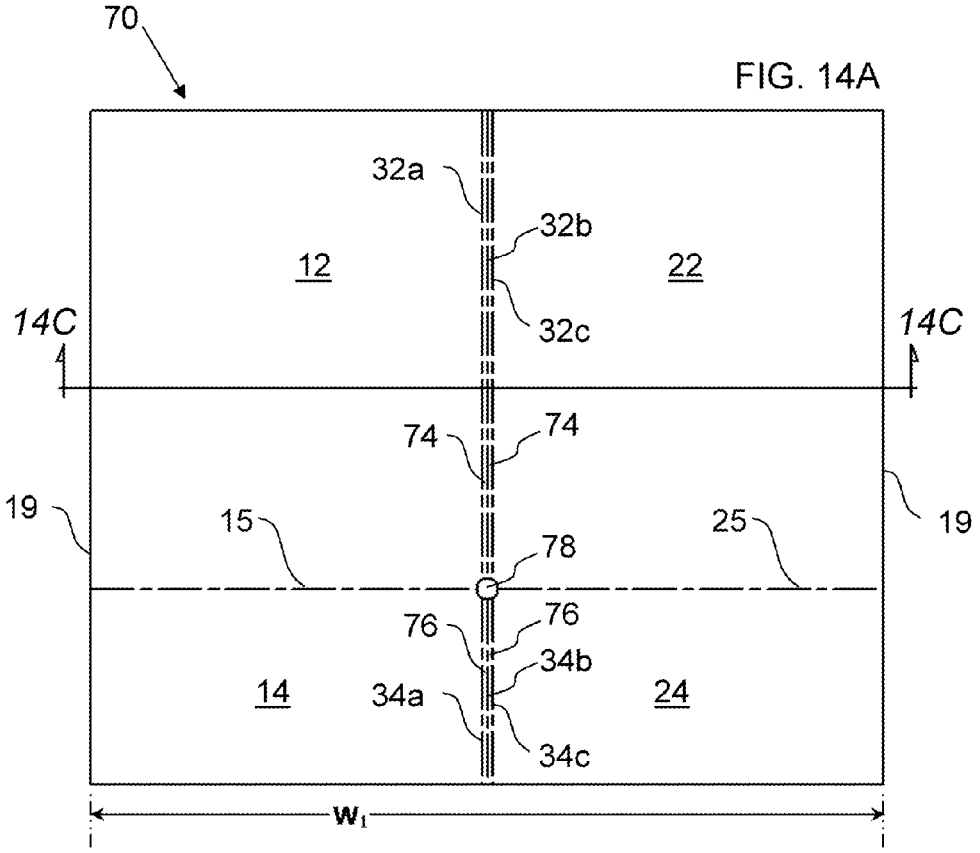


FIG. 14B

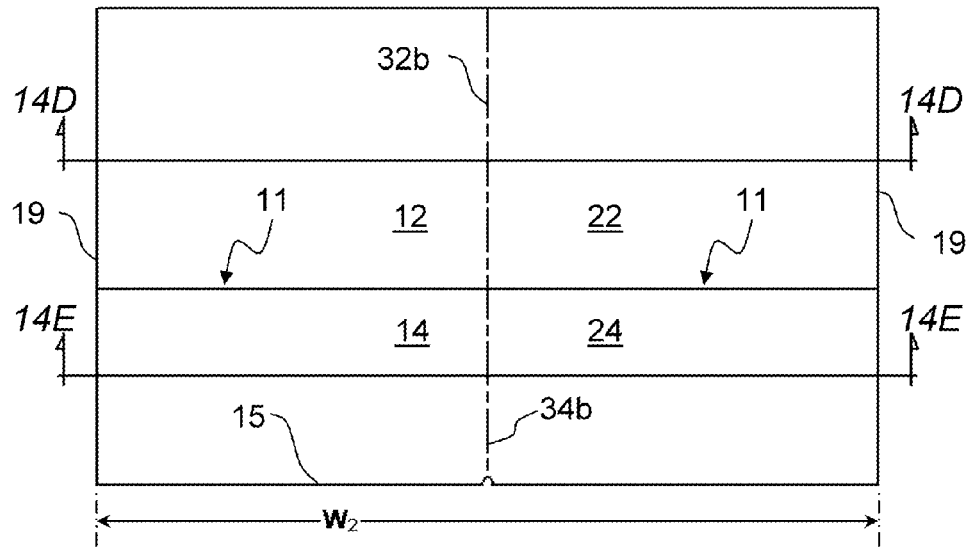
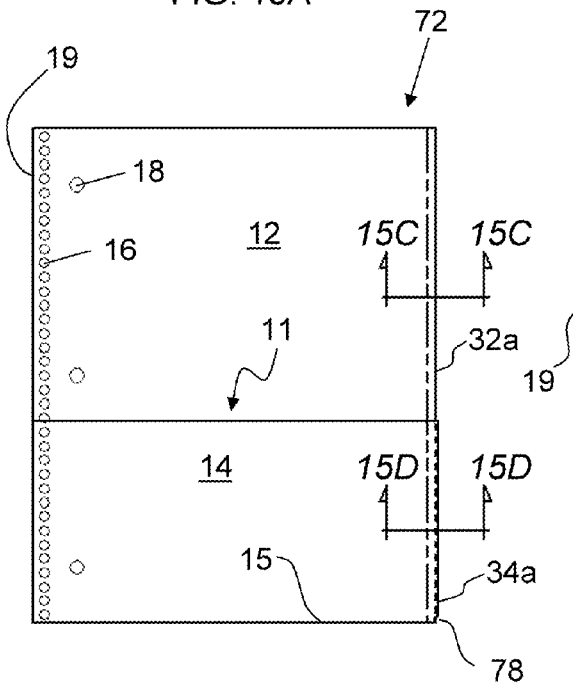


FIG. 15A



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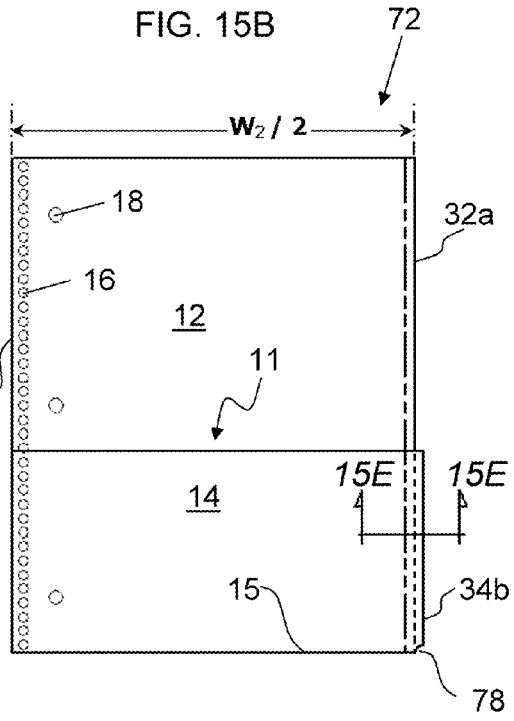


FIG. 15C

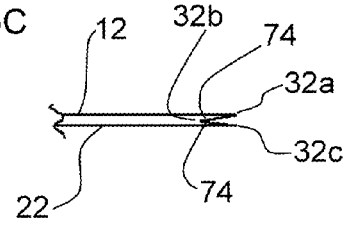


FIG. 15D

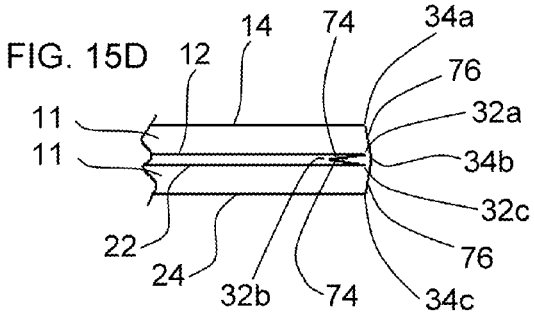


FIG. 15E

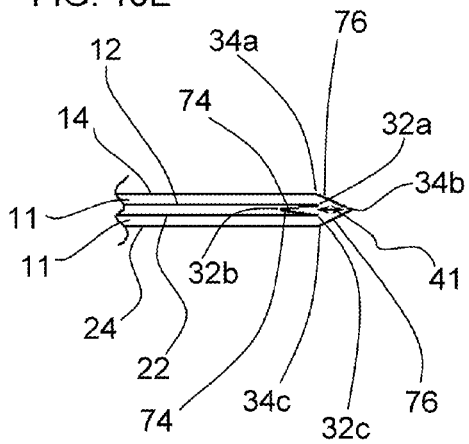
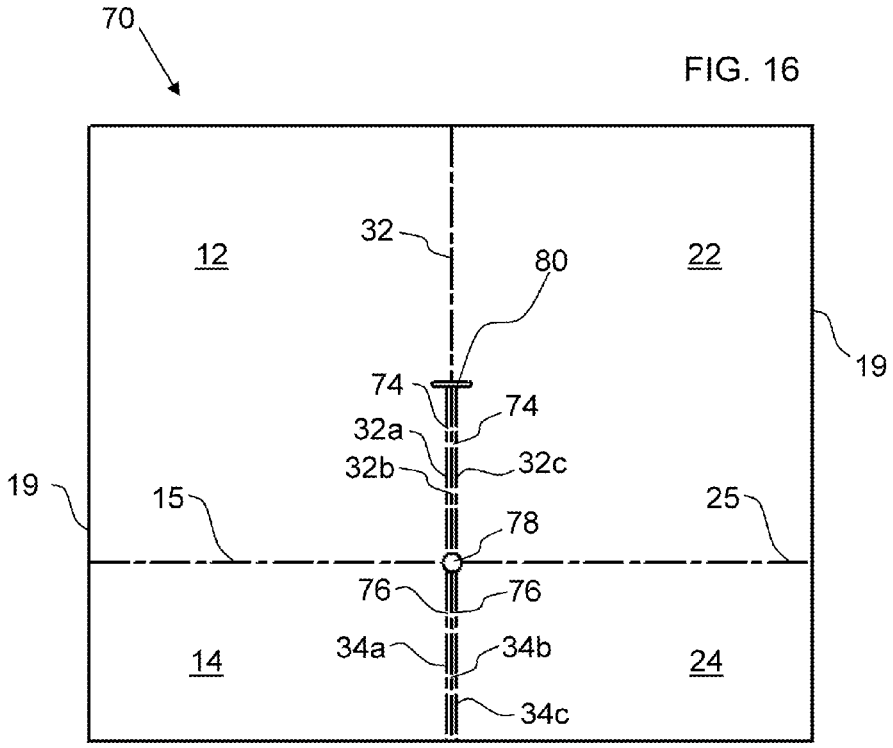


FIG. 16



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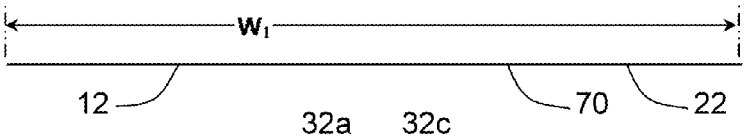


FIG. 14D

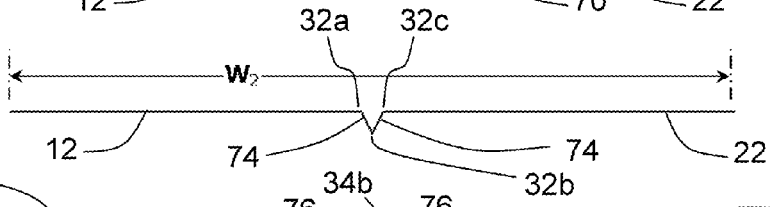


FIG. 14E

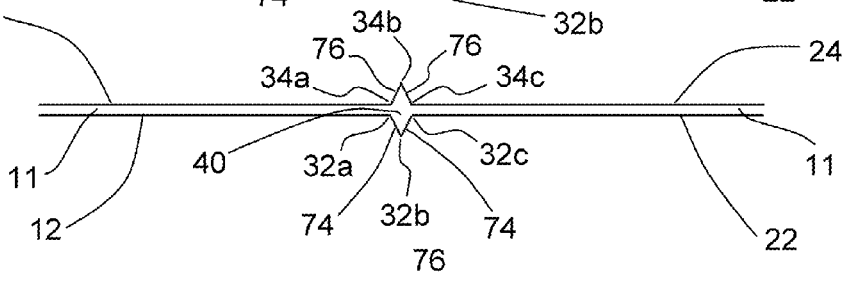


FIG. 17A

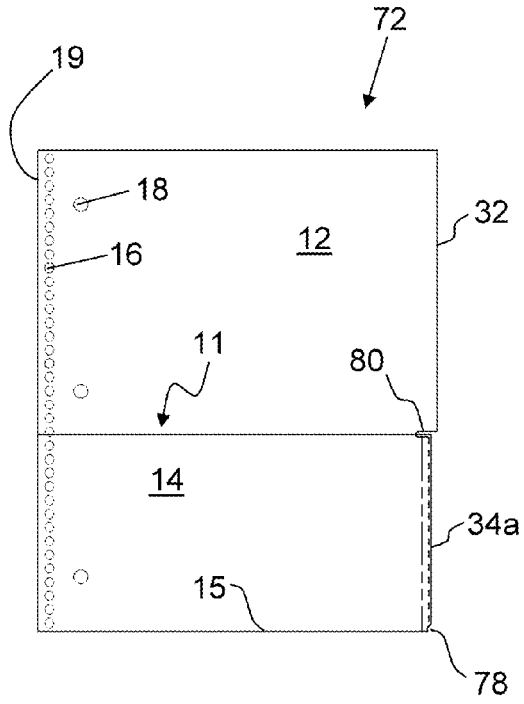
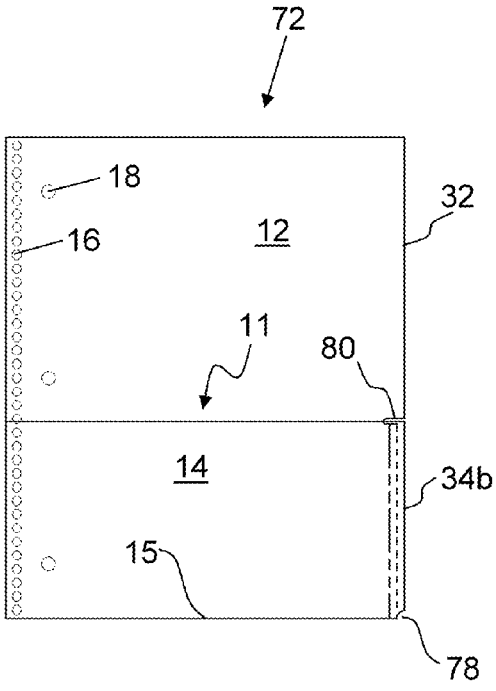


FIG. 17B



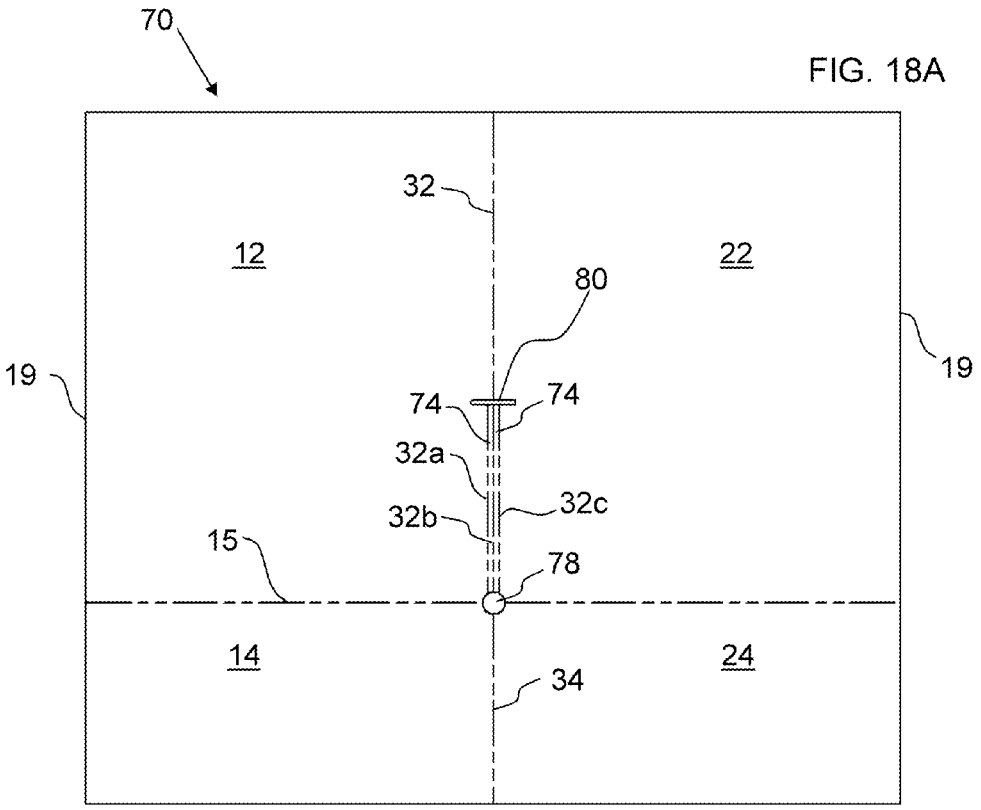


FIG. 18A

FIG. 18B

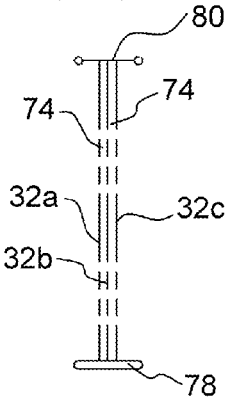


FIG. 18C

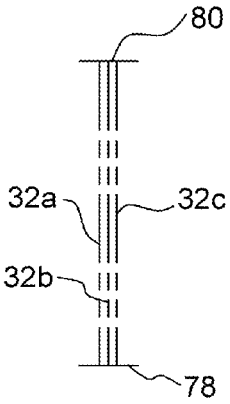


FIG. 18D

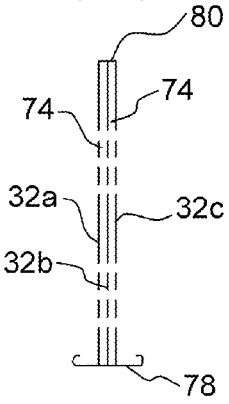


FIG. 19A

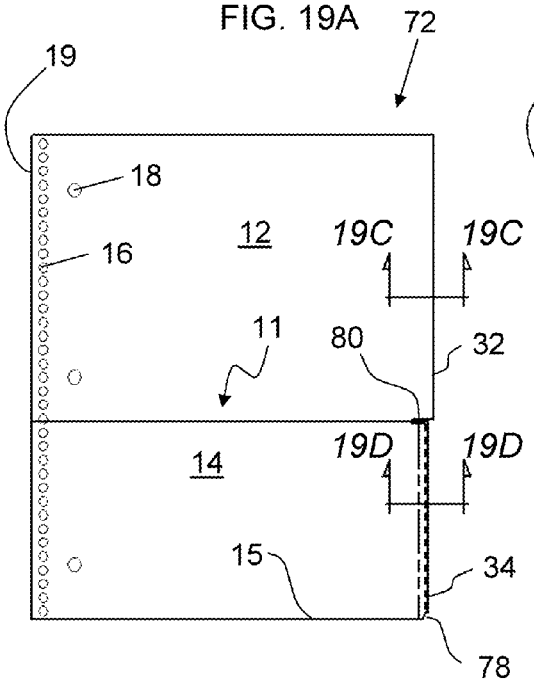


FIG. 19B

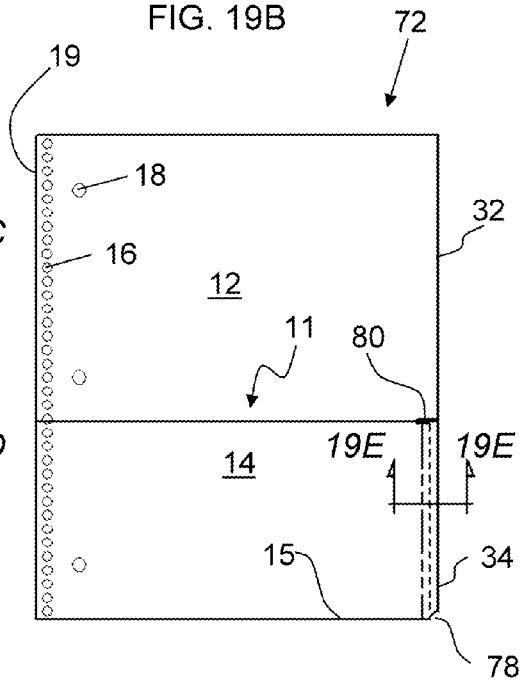


FIG. 19C

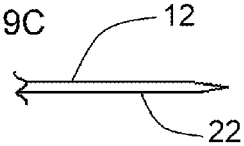


FIG. 19D

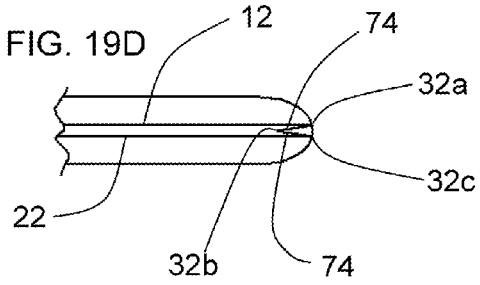
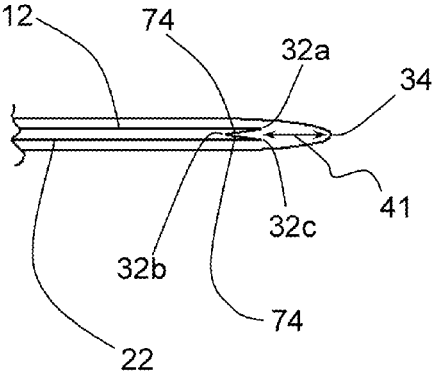


FIG. 19E



EXPANDABLE CAPACITY POCKET DEVICE

This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/750,563 entitled EXPANDABLE CAPACITY POCKET DEVICE filed on Jan. 9, 2013, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

The present invention is directed to a pocket device, and more particularly, to a pocket device having an expandable capacity.

BACKGROUND

Pocket dividers or folders may be used to store various items such as loose papers, writing utensils, or the like. In many cases, the shape and configuration of the pocket divider may limit its storage capacity. The storage capacity can be particularly limited when the pocket of the pocket divider is bound on various sides, or is bound into a component such as a notebook.

SUMMARY

In one embodiment, the invention is a pocket device including a major panel and a pocket panel coupled to the major panel and defining a pocket with the major panel. The pocket panel has a lateral dimension greater than a lateral dimension of the major panel at at least one position to thereby define a laterally-extending gap therebetween, which enables expansion of the pocket.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a top view of a blank that can be used to form a pocket divider;

FIG. **2** is a top view of the blank of FIG. **1**, with the pocket panels folded up;

FIG. **3**A is a top view of the blank of FIG. **2** folded about its centerline, forming the pocket divider, with various holes formed therethrough;

FIG. **3**B is a cross section taken along the line indicated in FIG. **3**A;

FIG. **4**A is a top view of the pocket divider of FIG. **3**A, with content items stored in the pocket;

FIG. **4**B is a cross section taken along the line indicated in FIG. **4**A;

FIG. **5** is a perspective view of the pocket divider of FIG. **4**A illustrating certain movement of the pocket when content items are placed therein;

FIG. **6** is a plan view of various cutouts that can be used in a pocket divider;

FIGS. **7**A and **7**B are front exploded views of various blanks that can be used to make pocket dividers;

FIGS. **8**A, **8**B, **8**C and **8**D are front exploded views of various blanks that can be used to make pocket dividers;

FIGS. **9**A, **9**B, **9**C and **9**D are front exploded views of various blanks that can be used to make pocket dividers;

FIG. **10** is a front view of pocket divider illustrating various locations along which various portions of the pocket divider can be attached;

FIG. **11**A is a front plan view of another embodiment of the pocket divider;

FIG. **11**B is a front plan view of the pocket divider of FIG. **11**A with items stored therein;

FIGS. **12**A and **12**B are front exploded views of various blanks that can be used to make pocket dividers;

FIG. **13** is a top view of a notebook incorporating the pocket divider of FIG. **3**A.

FIG. **14**A is a top view of a blank that can be used to form a pocket divider;

FIG. **14**B is a top view of the blank of FIG. **14**A, with the folding panels brought together and with the pocket panels folded up;

FIGS. **14**C, **14**D and **14**E are cross sections taken along the lines indicated in FIGS. **14**A and **14**B;

FIG. **15**A is a top view of the blank of FIG. **14**B after folding about its centerline, forming the pocket divider, with various holes formed therethrough, and shown in an expanded state;

FIG. **15**B is a top view of the pocket divider of FIG. **15**A, shown in a collapsed state;

FIGS. **15**C, **15**D and **15**E are cross sections taken along the lines indicated in FIGS. **15**A and **15**B;

FIG. **16** is a top view of a blank that can be used to form a pocket divider;

FIG. **17**A is a top view of a pocket divider formed from the blank of FIG. **16**, shown in an expanded state;

FIG. **17**B is a top view of a pocket divider of FIG. **17**A, shown in a collapsed state;

FIG. **18**A is a top view of a blank that can be used to form a pocket divider;

FIGS. **18**B, **18**C and **18**D are top views of other arrangement that can be used in the blank of FIG. **18**A;

FIG. **19**A is a top view of a pocket divider formed from the blank of FIG. **18**A, shown in an expanded state;

FIG. **19**B is a top view of the pocket divider of FIG. **19**A, shown in a collapsed state; and

FIGS. **19**C, **19**D and **19**E are cross sections taken along the lines indicated in FIGS. **19**A and **19**B.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

As shown in FIG. **13**, a pocket/pocket divider **10** can be part of, or used in conjunction with, a notebook, generally designated **2**. In one embodiment the notebook **2** includes a set of papers **4** bound together by a binding mechanism **6**, such as a coil binding mechanism, a spiral binding mechanism, twin-wire binding mechanism, adhesive bindings, sewn or stapled binding mechanism and the like. The papers **4** may be made of cellulose based or pulp based paper or the like that can easily be written upon by a variety of marking instruments, such as pens, pencils, markers, etc. The notebook **2** can include a front cover **8** and a back cover **9** that are bound to the papers **4** by the binding mechanism **6**. The notebook **2** can include one or more pocket dividers **10** spaced throughout the thickness of the notebook **2**/papers **4**.

Each pocket divider **10** can operate as a divider to segregate various portions of the notebook **2**/papers **4** for ease of access and use. Each pocket divider **10** may have the same footprint/outer dimensions as other bound contents, such as the papers **4** and/or covers **8**, **9**. Alternately, the pocket divider **10** may protrude in any direction in the plane of the pocket divider **10**, and/or be recessed in any direction in the plane, to provide a tactile separator function to the user. Each pocket divider **10** can include one or more pockets **11** to store loose items therein.

Each pocket divider **10** can be made from a blank such as the blank **1** shown in FIG. **1**. The blank **1** may be made of a relatively thin sheet material that is generally rectangular in shape, and includes a first or front major panel **12**, a first or front pocket panel **14**, a second, supplemental or back major panel **22**, and a second, supplemental or back pocket panel **24**.

The blank **1** includes a horizontally extending front pocket fold line **15** that separates the front major panel **12** and the front pocket panel **14**. Blank **1** also includes a horizontally extending back pocket fold line **25** that separates the back major panel **22** and the back pocket panel **24**. The blank **1** further includes a first or major vertical fold line **32** extending between and separating the front major panel **12** and back major panel **22**. Finally, blank **1** includes a second or minor or pocket vertical fold line **34** extending between and separating the front pocket panel **14** and back pocket panel **24**.

In the blank **1** the horizontal fold lines **15**, **25** are collinear and may be considered a single fold line; however once the pocket divider **10** is formed the fold lines **15**, **25** may appear more distinct. Similarly the vertical fold lines **32**, **34** in blank **1** are collinear and may be considered a single fold line but may become more distinct when the pocket divider **10** is formed.

The blank **1**/pocket divider **10** (i.e. including major panels **12**, **22** and pocket panels **14**, **24**) can be made of any of a wide variety of materials, including but not limited to plastic or polymers (such as polypropylene or vinyl), cardboard, paperboard, plastic encased cardboard, etc. It should be noted that the fold lines **15**, **25**, **32**, **34** can be formed as creases or areas of weakness in the blank **1**. However, the fold lines **15**, **25**, **32**, **34** need not necessarily be physically present in the blank **1**, and can merely be imaginary lines about which the blank **1** is later folded.

The blank **1** may include a cutout or relief cutout **40** positioned along, and removing a part of, a lower portion of the major vertical fold line **32** (also removing part of the major panel **12** and/or **22**). In the illustrated embodiment the cutout **40** includes an upper portion **42** positioned above the horizontal/pocket fold lines **15**, **25**, and also includes a lower portion **44** positioned below the horizontal pocket/fold lines **15**, **25** such that lower portion **44** of the cutout **40** is positioned along, and removes a part of, an upper portion of the minor vertical fold line **34** (and also portions of the horizontal fold lines **15**, **25**). For reasons which will later become apparent, the cutout **40** may in some cases have a length **1** equal to or greater than the height h of pocket panels **14**, **24**.

As shown in FIG. **2**, after the blank **1** of FIG. **1** is provided, the front pocket panel **14** and back pocket panel **24** can be folded upwardly about their associated horizontal fold lines **15**, **25**. After this folding step the front pocket panel **14** overlies, and forms a pocket **11** with, the front major panel **12**, and back pocket panel **24** overlies, and forms a pocket **11** with, the back major panel **22**. In one embodiment each pocket panel **14**, **24** has a lesser height and/or surface area than the associated major panel **12**, **22**, such that each pocket **11** covers only part of the surface area of the associated major panel **12**, **22**.

As shown in FIG. **3**A, the blank **1** of FIG. **2** can then be folded outwardly along vertical fold lines **32**, **34** causing the front major panels **12**, **22** to be aligned and flush against each other. A plurality of coil binding holes **16** (if desired) and ring binding holes **18** (if desired) can then be formed along or adjacent to (but spaced apart from) the inner edges **19** of the blank **1**/pocket divider **10**. The coil binding holes **16** are spaced and configured to receive turns of a spiral or twin wire binding mechanism **6** therethrough, and the ring binding holes **18** are spaced and configured to receive the rings of a ring binder (such as a 3-ring binder with standard ring spacing, not shown) therethrough.

The coil binding holes **16** and ring binding holes **18** may be made at any stage in the forming/manufacturing process, including in the blank **1** before folding, or after making either of the folds along the fold lines **15**/**25** or **32**/**34**, or even after assembling the pocket divider **10** into the binding mechanism **6** or other component. When the pocket divider **10** is assembled manually, it may not matter when the holes **16**, **18** are formed. In contrast, when the pocket divider **10** is assembled by machine or automatically, it may be advantageous to create holes **16**, **18** after pocket divider **10** has been folded into its position as shown in FIG. **3**A, or after assembling a stack of materials to create a notebook **2** or the like, to ensure the holes **16**, **18** are properly aligned.

The cutout **40** can be formed in a variety of manners. In one embodiment, the entire cutout **40**, including its upper **42** and lower **44** portions, are simultaneously formed in the unfolded blank **1** as shown in FIG. **1**. Alternately, the lower portion **44** of the cutout **40** can be formed at a different time from the upper portion **42**. In particular, in one case upper portion **42** of the cutout is formed in the blank **1** as shown in FIG. **1**, and the lower portion **44** of the cutout **40** (and/or a lower part of the upper portion **42**) is formed in the partially assembled pocket divider in its state as shown in FIG. **2** (such as by making a semi-circular cut shown as lower portion **44** in FIG. **2**), or in the pocket divider **10** as shown in FIG. **3**A (such as by making a quarter-circular cut). As noted above, the inner edges **19** of the pocket divider **1** can be bound by a binding mechanism extending through the coiling binding holes **16** and/or ring binding holes **18**. Alternately, or in addition, the inner edges **19** of major panels **12**, **22** may be bound by glue, stitching, stapling, or other methods, or may be left unbound.

After the pocket divider **1** is assembled, the fold line **34** is aligned with and positioned adjacent to the cutout **40**. In particular, when the pocket divider **10** is not full, the cutout **40** defines a laterally extending gap **41** between the outer edges of the major panels **12**/**22** and fold line **34**/outer edges of the pocket panels **14**/**24**, as shown in FIG. **3**B. Since the outer portions of the major panels **12**, **22** interior to the pocket **11** have been removed by the cutout **40**, the lower portions of the major panels **12**, **22** do not extend as far outward (i.e. to the right in FIG. **3**B) compared to the pocket panels **14**, **24**. Thus the pocket panels **14**, **24** may each have a greater lateral dimension than the major panels **12**, **22**. Stated differently, each pocket panel **14**, **24** can include an extension portion extending laterally beyond the major panels **12**, **22**. The gap **41** can extend in a direction generally parallel to a mouth of the pocket **11** (e.g. in the lateral direction), and/or generally perpendicular to the binding mechanism **6**.

This configuration, and in particular the presence and positioning of the gap **41**, provides increased expansion capability to the pockets **11**. In particular, FIG. **4**A illustrates the pocket **11** of FIG. **3**B in an expanded position with contents, such as a stack of papers **50**, positioned therein. As can be seen, when the volume of the pocket **11** increases, the fold line **34** may be pulled inwardly (to the left in FIGS. **3**A, **3**B, **4**A and **4**B), thereby allowing the pocket **11** to expand. In this manner, lateral movement of the pocket panels **14**/**24** enables the perpendicular distance between the pocket panels **14**/**24** and associated major panels **12**/**22** to increase, thereby increasing the storage capacity of the pockets **11**. As can be seen in FIG. **4**B, the pocket **11** may be able to expand such that the gap **41** is eliminated, and the fold line **34** (or immediately adjacent areas) engages the inner edge of the main panels **12**, **22**. Once the contents **50** of the pocket **11** are removed, the pocket **11** can return to its compact/flat/low profile shape, as shown in FIGS. **3**A and **3**B.

FIG. **5** is a perspective view of the pocket divider **10** illustrating some of the movement that may occur as pocket **11** expands to accommodate content items **50**. At position **62**, located along or adjacent to the lower edge **15** of the pocket divider **10**, the pocket panel **14** may move outwardly/forwardly in the z direction during expansion to provide additional capacity. The pocket panel **14** may be made of materials that are generally or relatively inelastic. Thus, in order for the panel **14** to move in the z direction, the pocket panel **14** may, as a whole, move downward slightly in the y direction. Assuming equal expansion of both the front and back pockets **11**, the movement of the lower edge **15** of each pocket divider may be limited to approximately the radius of the opening **44** at the lower end of cutout **40**.

At position **64**, located along or adjacent to the upper outer edge of the pocket **11** adjacent to the vertical fold **34**, upon expansion of the pocket **11**, the panel **14** may move outwardly/forwardly in the z direction to provide increased capacity. To accommodate such movement in the z direction, the pocket panel **14** may move laterally inwardly/leftwardly in the −x direction at position **64**. As noted above, such movement in the x direction is permitted by the cutout **40** and limited by the size of the gap **41**.

At position **66**, located along or adjacent to the upper inner edge **19** of the pocket **11**, during expansion the panel **14** may move outwardly/forwardly in the z direction and also move laterally/rightward in the x direction. Such lateral movement may be limited by engagement of a binding hole **16** with the binding mechanism **6** (such as a wire coil passing through holes **16**). However, the binding holes **16** are typically larger than the wire received thereon, so that some lateral movement is permitted although binding holes **16**, **18** in the pocket panel **14** may move out of precise alignment with binding holes **16** in the major panel **12**, as shown in FIG. **5**. Likewise the binding holes **18** are typically larger than the rings of a binder to permit movement in a similar manner.

The cutout **40** can have various sizes, shapes and dimensions when formed in the blank **1** of FIG. **1**, besides the oval shape, some shapes of which are shown in FIG. **6**. In one case, for example, the cutout **40** and/or gap **41** may have a lateral width of at least about 1/16", or at least about 1/8," or at least about 3/8" to provide sufficient expansion capabilities although the width can be greater or less as desired. In one case the cutout **40** can have a lateral width less than about 10%, or less than about 5% of the lateral width of the blank **1**/pocket divider **10**, so that the pocket divider **10** retains sufficient structural integrity. The cutout **40** may also have a width greater than about 1%, or greater than about 2%, of the lateral width of the blank **1**/pocket divider **10** so that the pocket divider **10** has sufficient expansion capabilities.

The lower portion **44** of the cutout **40** may be enlarged (i.e. have a lateral width greater than the majority of the cutout **40** or the body of the cutout **40**) as shown for example in cutouts **40**C, **40**D, **40**E and **40**F of FIG. **6**, which provides further expansion in the corners of the pockets **11**, which can otherwise provide a pinch/constraining point. The upper end **42** of the cutout **40** may also be enlarged as desired, for example as shown in cutouts **40**E, **40**F to enable greater expansion of the upper edge of the pocket **11**.

A conventional pocket may hold about 25 sheets of material (depending on the size and thickness of the sheets), the dimensions of the pocket, etc. However, by providing the cutout **40**, the outer edge of pocket **11** may move as outlined above to provide increased expansion of pocket **11**. Therefore more contents may be added to pocket **11**, for example about 45 sheets of materials (again, depending on the size and thickness of the sheets and the dimensions of the pocket), a capacity increase of about 80%. If the pockets **11** are equally loaded, such a cutout **40** may permit each pocket **11** to easily hold stack of contents **50** about 3/16" thick (e.g., half the width of the cutout **40** when the cutout **50** is 3/8" wide).

As outlined above, the pocket divider **10** may be bound into a binding mechanism **6** using coil binding holes **16** or into a ring binder using ring binder holes **18**. Although the pocket divider **10** shown in FIGS. **3-5** has coil binding holes **16** and/or ring binding holes **18** located along the inner **19** (i.e. left) edge, it should be understood that binding holes **16**, **18** and/or a binding mechanism may be provided along a different edge (not shown), for example along the top edge, right/outer edge **32**/**34**, etc.

The pocket divider **10** may also or instead be used as a standalone device, not bound to any other component. In this case the inner edges **19** can be free/uncoupled. Alternately one or both pocket panels **14**, **24** are secured to their associated major panel **12**, **22** along the inner edges **19**, and/or the major panels **12**, **22** are secured together along their inner edges **19** or their inner faces, or all the panels **12**, **14**, **22**, **24** are secured together along their inner edges **19**. The panels **12**, **14**, **22**, **24** (and other securing or coupling operations disclosed herein) can be adhered together along their inner edges by a variety of methods, such as heat welding, sonic welding, stitching, adhesives, staples, heat sealing, staples, rivets or other mechanical fasteners, etc. The divider pocket **10** may include only a single major panel if desired, and/or may have one a single pocket panel defining a single pocket **11**, or utilize two pocket panels to define to pockets **11**.

Instead of making the pocket divider from a single-piece blank as shown in FIG. **1**, two or more separate pieces may be joined together to form a pocket divider, as shown in FIGS. **7-9**. These assembly methods may define certain edges by joining separate pieces of material together along edges which may be folds in a single piece of material in the embodiment of FIG. **1**.

FIG. **7**A shows four separate pieces that can be used to make a pocket divider, including front pocket panel **14**A, front major panel **12**A, back major panel **22**A, and back pocket panel **24**A. FIG. **7**B shows three separate pieces used to make the pocket divider, including only a single front pocket panel **14**B, a single major panel **12**B, and back pocket panel **24**B. Certain panels may be joined together along certain edges to form the finished pocket divider. As an aid for securing the panels, certain panels may be provided with securing flaps, such as side flap **13**A (FIG. **7**B) for joining the outer or right side edges of pocket panels **14**B, **24**B. The front pocket panel **14**B of FIG. **7**B includes a bottom flap **13**B for joining the lower edges of pocket panels **14**B, **24**B. Although securing flaps are not shown for many of the remaining or previous figures, it should be understood that such securing flaps may be included or omitted according to manufacturing preference.

FIGS. **8**A-**8**D show various combinations of two separate folded pieces that can be used to make a pocket divider, where the folds are positioned along side/outer edges. In FIG. **8**A, front major panel **12**C and back major panel **22**C are joined by a fold along their inner or left edge, and front pocket panel **14**C and back pocket panel **24**C are joined by a fold along their inner/left edge. In FIG. **8**B, front major panel **12**D and back major panel **22**D are joined by a fold along their outer or right edge, and front pocket panel **14**D and back pocket panel **24**D are joined by a fold along their outer or right edge. In FIG. **8**C, front major panel **12**E and

back major panel **22**E are joined by a fold along their outer or right edge, while front pocket panel **14**E and back pocket panel **24**E are joined by a fold along their inner or left edge. In FIG. **8**D, front major panel **12**F and back major panel **22**F are joined by a fold along their inner or left edge, while front pocket panel **14**F and back pocket panel **24**F are joined by a fold along their outer or right edge.

FIGS. **9**A-**9**D illustrate various combinations of two separate folded pieces that can be used to make the pocket divider, where the folds occur along top or bottom edges. In FIG. **9**A, front major panel **12**G and back major panel **22**G are joined by a fold along their lower edge, and front pocket panel **14**G and back pocket panel **24**G are joined by a fold along their lower edge. In FIG. **9**B, front major panel **12**H and back major panel **22**H are joined by a fold along their top edge, while front pocket panel **14**H and back pocket panel **24**H are joined by a fold along their lower edges. In FIG. **9**C, front major panel **12**J and front pocket panel **14**J are joined by a fold along their lower edge, and back pocket panel **22**J and back pocket panel **24**J are joined by a fold along their lower edge.

The embodiments of FIGS. **8**A, **8**B, **8**C, **8**D, **9**A, **9**B and **9**C and **9**D show a two-ply single major panel (such as panels **12**C, **22**C of FIG. **8**A). However, instead of using two major panels, a single major panel (such as major panel **12**B of FIG. **7**B) may be used. For example, FIG. **9**D illustrates a single major panel **12**K joined to a back pocket panel **24**K along their lower edge. A front pocket panel **14**K is securable to the back pocket panel **24**K via its flaps **13**A, **13**B. As can also be seen the major panel **12**K includes cutouts along both its inner and outer edges, allowing for expansion of its associated pockets along two edges thereof. Thus, the expansion capabilities described and shown above can be utilized in the inner edge of the pocket/pocket divider, or the outer edge, or both edges (as shown in FIG. **9**D)

FIG. **10** illustrates examples of various joining locations when the pocket divider is made from more than one piece of material. For example front pocket panel **14** and back pocket panel **24** may be joined together along their outer or right edge along securing line **34***w*. Due to cutout **40**, securing line **34***w* can avoid securing the pocket panels **14**, **24** to the major panel(s) **12**, **22**. If two major panels **12**, **22** are used, the outer edges of the major panels **12**, **22** may be joined together along an upper portion of their outer edges along securing line **32***w*, and/or along a lower portion of their outer edges by securing line **40***w*.

The front pocket panel **14** and back pocket panel **24** may be joined together along their lower edge along a single securing line **15***w* which may also secure or join together front major panel **12** and back major panel **22**. However, if the bottom of the major panel or panels **12**, **22** stops short of the bottom of the pocket panels **14**, **24**, it may be possible to have securing line **15***w* join only the pocket panels **14**, **24** and not the major panel or panels **22**, **22**. As another alternative securing line **15***w* may join the lower edges of front pocket panel **14** and front major panel **12**, while securing line **25***w* may join the lower edges of back pocket panel **24** and back major panel **22**.

If two major panels **12**, **22** are used, their top edges may be joined along securing line **36***w*, and/or their left or inner edges **19** may be joined together along an upper portion by securing line **37***w* and/or along a lower portion by securing line **38***w*. Securing line **38***w* may join any of the panels **12**, **14**, **22**, **24** along their lower inner or left edge. However in some cases it may be desired not to join pocket panel(s) **14**, **24** by securing line **38***w*, in which case the inner or left edge of the pocket panels **14**, **24** may stop short of that edge, and instead follow a path as shown as line **17**B instead of following to the inner or left edge as with line **17**A. This alternate configuration prevents the pocket panels **12**, **14** from being joined along securing line **38***w*.

Many of the previous embodiments illustrate a pocket divider in which that right, or outer, edge of the pocket divider includes the cutout **40**/gap **41**. However, a cutout **40**/gap **41**, which provides the expansion features, can be positioned on either the right/outer **32**/**34** and/or left/inner **19** edges. For example, FIG. **9**D, briefly described above, illustrates such expansion features on both edges of that pocket divider. FIG. **11**A illustrates another embodiment in which a cutout **40'** is positioned at or adjacent to the inner edge **19** of the pocket divider **52**, defining a gap **41'** between the outer edges of the pocket panels **14**, **24** and the associated inner edge of the major panels **12**, **22**. If desired, a cutout **40**/gap **41** can also be provided along the right/outer edges of the pocket divider **52**. In this manner, when contents **50** are placed into the pocket **11**, the pocket **11** expands in capacity due to closure/elimination of the gaps **41'**/**41** in the same or similar manner to that outlined above, providing double expansion capacity.

The cutout **40'** can be formed at nearly any stage during formation of the pocket divider **52**, including when the associated blank is unfolded, partially folded, or fully folded. In the embodiment of FIG. **11**A the cutout **40'** extends only part of the height of the pocket panel **14**. Since the cutout **40'** can remove some of the binding holes **16**, it may therefore be desired to limit the amount of binding holes **16** that are removed so that the pocket divider **52** can be securely coupled to the binding mechanism **6**. Moreover, in the illustrated embodiment the cutout **40'** is formed at or adjacent to the upper edge of the pocket panels **14**, **24** and/or spaced away from the lower edge. This configuration ensures that the binding holes **16** at the lower end of pocket divider **52** remain intact so that the lower edge of the pocket divider **52** is bound to the binding mechanism **6** to help retain the pocket divider **52** in place. However, if desired the cutout **40'** can be positioned along the lower edge of the pocket panels **14**, **24**, which can provide greater expansion capacity, since the bottom corner of the pockets **11** can otherwise provide a pinch point. Thus, the cutout **40'** can be positioned along any position along the sides of the pocket panels **14**, **24**, or along the entire height of a pocket panel **14**, **24**.

FIG. **12**A illustrates another alternate embodiment in which case a single major panel **12** is secured to pocket panels **14**, **24** that are joined along their common lower edges **58**. The pocket panel **14** has a pair of securing flaps **13**A protruding outwardly therefrom that can be utilized to secure the pocket panel **14** to the other pocket panel **24** and/or the major panel **12**. Moreover, in this embodiment the major panel **12** has a securing tab **54** aligned with, and configured to fit through, a slot **56** formed along the fold line **58** separating the pocket panels **14**, **24**. The securing tab **54** can extend through the slot **56** and then be folded upwardly flat and secured against either pocket panel **14**, **24** to aid in securing the major panel **12** in place. FIG. **12**B illustrates another embodiment similar to that of FIG. **12**A, except that the major panel **12** includes a cutout **40** formed on both lateral sides thereof, and the major panel **12** lacks the binder holes **16**.

FIG. **14**A illustrates another blank **70** which can be used to form a pocket divider **72**. In this case, rather than including only a single major vertical fold line **32**, the blank **70** includes a set of three major vertical folds lines **32***a*, **32***b*, **32***c* positioned between the major panels **12**, **22**. Similarly,

rather than including only a single minor/pocket vertical fold line **34**, the blank **70** includes a set of three minor fold lines **34***a*, **34***b*, **34***c* positioned between the pocket panels **14**, **24**. The fold lines **32***a*, **32***b*, **32***c* define two folding panels **74** therebetween, and the fold lines **34***a*, **34***b*, **34***c* define two folding panels **76** therebetween. In this case the major panels **12**, **22** and pocket panels **14**, **24** can be considered to be coupled together along fold areas defined by the fold lines/panels. The blank **70** may include an opening **78** positioned at the intersection of the fold lines **15**, **25**, **32**, **34**, and the blank **70** may have a lateral width w_1.

As shown in FIGS. **14**B and **14**D, in order to assemble the pocket divider **72**, the blank **70** is folded about the fold lines **32***a*, **32***b*, **32***c* bringing the panels **74** into a generally parallel facially-abutting position. The blank **70** can also be simultaneously folded about fold lines **34***a*, **34***b*, **34***c*, bringing the panels **76** generally into facial abutment. The panels **74**, **76** can extend either upwardly or downwardly from the plane of the blank **70**, but in the illustrated embodiment extend downwardly, as shown in FIG. **14**D. After the blank **70** is folded in this manner, the blank **70** has a lateral width w_2 that is less than the original lateral width w_1. Although not shown in the illustrated embodiment, if desired the panels **74** positioned between the major panels **12**, **22** can be secured together in a facially abutting configuration.

After the blank **70** is folded about the fold lines **32***a*, **32***b*, **32***c*, **34***a*, **34***b*, **34***c*, the pocket panels **14**, **24** are then folded about fold lines **15**, **25**, until the pocket panels **14**, **24** are facing the associated major panel **12**, **22**, as shown in FIG. **14**B. As can be seen in FIG. **14**E, in this configuration the folded panels **76** of the pocket panels **14**, **24** are positioned above the folded panels **74** of the major panels **12**, **22**, and extend in opposite directions.

Once the blank **70** is formed into the configuration as shown in FIG. **14**B, panels **12**, **22** are folded about fold lines **32***b*, **34***b*, resulting in the pocket divider **72** shown in FIG. **15**A. FIG. **15**B illustrates the pocket divider **72** in its collapsed condition. As can be seen in FIG. **15**E, the folding of the panels **74**, **76** provides pockets **11** in which the major panels **12**, **22** have a lesser lateral width than the lateral width of the pocket panels **14**, **24**. In this state a gap **41** is positioned between the outwardly-folded panels **76** of the pocket panels **14**, **24** and the major panels **12**, **22**. The gap **41** provides expansion capability similar to that described above for other embodiments. In particular, as shown in FIGS. **15**A and **15**D, the pockets **11** can expand in capacity, moving the panels **76** to a position where the panels **76** are more perpendicular, or generally perpendicular, with respect to the major panels **12**, **22**/pocket panels **14**, **24**, such that the gap **41** is reduced or eliminated. When in the expanded state the pocket panels **14**, **24** move away from the associated major panels **12**, **22** in a perpendicular direction, providing increased capacity. When the additional capacity is no longer needed, the pockets **11** can be folded flat, moving the panels **76** to a position where the panels **76** are more parallel, or generally parallel, with respect to the panels **12**, **14**, **22**, **24**.

FIGS. **16**, **17**A and **17**B illustrate another embodiment similar to that of FIGS. **14** and **15**. However, in the embodiment of FIGS. **16**, **17**A and **17**B the fold lines **32***a*, **32***b*, **32***c*/panels **74** do not extend the entire height of the major panels **12**, **22**, and instead are positioned only in the bottom portion thereof, having a height generally equal to or greater than the height of the pocket panels **14**, **24**. In this embodiment the blank **70** may include an opening or cutout in the form of a stress relief feature **80** at the distal end of the fold lines **32***a*, **32***b*, **32***c*/panels **74**. The stress relief feature **80** enables the panels **74** to be folded about the fold lines **32***a*, **32***b*, **32***c*, reducing the effective width of the major panels **12**, **22** in that area to provide the gap **41** in the same manner as shown in FIG. **15**E. Once the pocket divider **72** is formed, as shown in FIGS. **17**A and **17**B, the pocket divider **72** has expansion capabilities similar to those described above in the context of FIGS. **14** and **15**. The embodiment of FIGS. **16**, **17**A, **17**B provides folding/panels **74** only where needed, but the embodiment of FIGS. **14** and **15** may provide ease of manufacturing.

FIGS. **18**-**19** illustrate an additional embodiment similar to that of FIGS. **16** and **17**. However, in the embodiment of FIGS. **18**-**19**, the fold lines **34***a*, **34***c*/panels **74** are not provided on the pocket panels **14**, **24**, and an opening **78** and stress relief **80** are positioned at either end of the fold line **32**/panels **74** to enable the panels **74** to be folded in the manner outlined above. Once the pocket divider **72** is formed from the blank **70** of FIG. **18**A, as shown in FIGS. **19**A and **19**B, the pocket divider **72** has expansion capabilities as described above in the context of FIGS. **14** and **15**. However, because pocket panels **14**, **24** lack the defined fold lines **34***a*, **34***b*, **34***c* the outer edges of the pockets **11** have more of a rounded shape when in the expanded state, as shown in FIG. **19**D, and therefore may have a lesser capacity than the pocket of FIGS. **16** and **17**. The blank **70** shown in FIG. **18**A is somewhat similar in function to the blank **1** of FIG. **1**, in that the opening **80**, stress relief **78** and fold lines **32***a*, **32***b*, **32***c* of FIG. **18**A enable the lateral dimension of the blank **70** to be reduced, providing features analogous to the cutout **40** of FIG. **1**.

Having described the invention in detail and by reference to the various embodiments, it should be understood that modifications and variations thereof are possible without departing from the scope of the claims of the present application.

What is claimed is:

1. A pocket device, comprising:

a major panel having a front major panel, a back major panel, and a corresponding lateral dimension; and

a pocket panel having a front pocket panel and a back pocket panel, said front pocket panel coupled to said front major panel and defining a front pocket with said front major panel, said back pocket panel being coupled to said back major panel and defining a back pocket with said back major panel, wherein said pocket panel defines a fold line extending between said front pocket panel and said back pocket panel that is positioned along an outermost edge of said pocket device when folded in a closed position, wherein a lateral dimension of said pocket panel is greater than said corresponding lateral dimension of said major panel to define a laterally-extending gap therebetween that extends along an entire height of said pocket panel along said outermost edge of said pocket device when folded in a closed position, said laterally-extending gap positioned relative to said fold line such that said fold line is pulled inwards to enable expansion of at least one of said pockets based on content being placed within said pocket panel, said height of said pocket panel being generally perpendicular to said lateral dimension.

2. The pocket device of claim **1** wherein said front pocket panel is oriented generally parallel with and facing said major panel to define said front pocket, said front pocket having a mouth, and wherein said gap extends in a lateral direction generally parallel to said mouth.

3. The pocket device of claim 1 wherein said major panel and said pocket panel are coupled together along a binding edge, and wherein said gap is positioned on an opposite side of said pocket device relative to said binding edge.

4. The pocket device of claim 1 wherein said pocket device is configured such that a volume of at least one of said pockets increases as a lateral dimension of said gap decreases due to movement of said pocket panel.

5. The pocket device of claim 1 wherein said lateral dimension of said pocket panel is greater than said corresponding lateral dimension of said major panel due to the gap being a cutout in said major panel.

6. The pocket device of claim 1 wherein said major panel and said pocket panel are formed of a single unitary piece of material and are coupled along a pocket fold line positioned along a bottom of at least one of said pockets.

7. The pocket device of claim 1 wherein said gap is positioned adjacent to and generally aligned with a major fold line or area.

8. A pocket device comprising:

a first major panel and a second major panel coupled together along a fold line;

a first pocket panel coupled to said first major panel along a first pocket fold line and defining a first pocket with said first major panel; and

a second pocket panel coupled to said second major panel along a second pocket fold line and defining a second pocket with said second major panel, wherein said first pocket panel and said second pocket panel are coupled together at an outermost fold line positioned along an outermost edge of said pocket device when folded in a closed position, and wherein each pocket panel has a lateral dimension greater than a lateral dimension of the associated major panel at at least a distal end of said pocket panel positioned opposite the associated pocket fold line to thereby define a lateral gap therebetween, said lateral gap disposed along said outermost edge of said pocket device when folded in a closed position having a greater height than said first pocket panel and said second pocket panel, said laterally-extending gap positioned relative to said outermost fold line such that said outermost fold line is pulled inwards to enable expansion of said first and second pockets based on content being placed within at least one of said first pocket panel and said second pocket panel.

9. A pocket device comprising:

a major panel having a front major panel, a back major panel, and a corresponding lateral dimension; and

a pocket panel having a front pocket panel and a back pocket panel, said front pocket panel coupled to said front major panel along a pocket fold line and defining a front pocket with said front major panel, said back pocket panel being coupled to said back major panel along said pocket fold line and defining a back pocket, wherein said pocket panel defines a second fold line extending between said front pocket panel and said back pocket panel and positioned along an outermost edge of said pocket device, wherein said pocket panel has a lateral dimension greater than said corresponding lateral dimension of said major panel at least at a distal end of said pocket panel positioned opposite said pocket fold line to thereby define a lateral-extending gap therebetween that has a height greater than said pocket panel, said laterally-extending gap extending along said outermost edge of said pocket device and positioned relative to said second fold line such that said second fold line is pulled inwards to thereby enable expansion of at least one of said pockets based on content being placed within said pocket panel.

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